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An Unexpected Career: God at Work?

by

Raymond M. Veh

Edited by Robert L. Frey

This article is based primarily on a copy of "Data Assembled on Request of the Center for the Study of EUB Church History," United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. It was the basis for an interview conducted on May 21, 1981. The carbon copy was supplied to the editor by Dr. Dwight Busacca who received the manuscript from Dr. Veh's daughter, Marguerite Lueptow. Although much of the manuscript was written in the third person, it was written by Dr. Veh.

Raymond Michael Veh was born in Gibsonburg, Ohio, on June 26, 1901. Both his paternal and maternal families were pioneers in northwestern Ohio, some immigrated from Germany. The town of Gibsonburg was established largely on the farm of his maternal grandparents, John Frederick and Margret Friar Yeastling. His father, Michael George Veh, who came from Germany at the age of five with his parents, John Michael and Dorothea Dornberger Veh, was a furniture dealer and funeral director for 55 years. He and his wife, Ella Yeasting Veh, were respected residents of that community and lived to the ages of 88 and 94 respectively.

Raymond grew up in Trinity Church of the Evangelical Association. His parents were devout Christians who provided excellent role models for young Raymond. His journalistic inclinations began in his high school days when he submitted items to his hometown weekly newspaper on the activities at Trinity Church. During his high school years his maternal grandmother often suggested that he consider the ministry. A young minister, Rev. C. L. Allen, provided a model for ministry for Raymond, but he had not made a final decision by the time he entered college.

Raymond attended North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, and graduated in 1923 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. During his college days he supplied information on the activities at North Central College to the denominational weekly—the *Evangelical Messenger*. The president of the seminary

located on the North Central campus interviewed Raymond at one point and strongly encouraged him to enter the ministry, but he resisted.

While in college he met Helen Pauline Zimmerman of Oak Park, Illinois. Her family had a long association with the Evangelical Association and her father, Paul F. Zimmerman a bank president, was also a prominent layman in First Evangelical Church of Oak Park. He was the Illinois Conference delegate to several General Conferences including the 1922 conference in Detroit, Michigan, when union of the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical churches occurred. Helen also graduated in 1923, but it was five years before they were married.

A scholarship took Raymond to the University of Illinois where he completed a masters degree in Sociology and spent a year as Director of Student Activities at the Pilgrim Foundation. After completing his degree he was hired as Assistant Professor of Sociology and Assistant Dean of Men at Evansville College (now University) in Evansville, Indiana. For four summers Raymond took eleven weeklong North Central College Glee Club tours from coast to coast, getting acquainted with the larger Evangelical Church and the nation in the process.

Meanwhile, Helen Zimmerman had embarked on a career as a Home Economics teacher first in Washington, Illinois, and then in Sycamore, Illinois. Each May while in Sycamore she staged a big dinner for the school board, in

part to showcase the talents of her students. Raymond, realizing that a doctorate was necessary for advancement in college teaching, began work on the degree at New York University. Clearly he was preparing for a career as an academic and not a pastor.

But graduate work took its toll. As Dr. Veh reports: "One Sunday afternoon I went to a vesper service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (in New York city). Dissatisfied with myself and unhappy with prospects of grueling education endeavors, I said as I felt God speaking to me, 'Here I am, O God, take me and use me as you will. I'll do what you want me to do.' I felt a new calm and certainty inwardly that all would work out well." It did.

The following Thursday Raymond received a telegram from the Secretary of the Board of Publications of the Evangelical Church informing him that he had been elected editor of *The Evangelical Crusader*, the youth weekly of the Evangelical Church. Since he had no idea he was being considered for the position he was puzzled until he recalled an incident of the previous summer. While attending the International Christian Endeavor Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. Elmer W. Praetorius, then General Secretary of Christian Education, had had lunch with Raymond. During lunch Praetorius asked Raymond, "What would you do if you were editing a youth paper?" It appeared to be a casual lunch and although the conversation was pleasant, Raymond had no idea this was an interview.

Years later, reflecting on his appointment as editor and his subsequent acceptance of the position, Raymond Veh commented: "I was certain that the yield[ing] of self to Christ the Sunday previous was necessary before God could use me in his work. The years in his service [as an editor] gave me a happy life and a rewarding career."

Raymond withdrew from his doctoral program, moved to Cleveland (the site of the Evangelical Association's publishing house) and became editor on October 10, 1927. Slightly over a year later he and Helen were married on November 17, 1928. Eventually they had a daughter, Marguerite Anne, who married Wayne Lueptow, and they had two sons.

After assuming his editorial position, he accepted his call to ministry. In 1930 he was ordained a deacon and two years later an elder in the Ohio Conference of the Evangelical Church. Although he never served a parish, he preached many times during his career and had an outstanding reputation as a preacher. His comments on the way his preaching changed over the years are most interesting.

"My early preaching was highly personal in delineating the influence of sin on persons even to the pointing of fingers at members in the Church and community. Repeated outlining of the procedures for salvation from sin and the necessity for individuals to turn their backs on the devil and accept Christ as Saviour and Lord are found in these sermons. I frequently made use of graphic deathbed scenes of conversion along with constant sermonizing on the immorality of [the] use of liquor, tobacco, attendance at the theatre, motion pictures, and dance halls were present. All too frequently, I made detailed presentations of theological concepts often with the individual church members having little background knowledge of the same . . . thus being 'out of touch' with the person in the pew."

"Beginning in the 1920s new preaching emphases emerged [in his own preaching]. One was the effort to relate religion to life, calling parishioners to think through the moral principles involved in consistently living religiously. Another was on applying Christian beliefs to social issues, business, and political problems, national and international trends. This was based on the emphasis of developing a social consciousness among Christians based on Biblical personalities and incidents. Other new emphases were on the necessity of the Church to influence all phases of community life, on religion merely as a technique for 'togetherness' without constant evaluation of living on the basis of moral and ethical values, and on the Gospel as if it were a commonplace with the imparting of facts taking the place of the zestful investment of inspiration and whole-souled radiance."

But it was as an editor that Dr. Veh had his greatest influence. Quadrennial General Conference elected him to his general church editorial post from 1930 through 1968. In 1962

the Study Commission on Church Literature related *Builders*, his youth weekly, to the curriculum as the publication for Senior High youth. In the Evangelical Church he held the title of Director of Youth Work and during the final three years of his career he held the title Editor of Youth Publications.

During his years in Cleveland, Raymond continued his education by attending Cleveland College, Western Reserve University, and Nast Theological Seminary. Westmar College (LeMars, Iowa) conferred on him the Doctor of Divinity degree in 1936 and the Doctor of Literature degree in 1955.

In 1934 the impact of the Great Depression caused the Evangelical Church to merge its two publishing houses. Although the Cleveland publishing house was older, the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, house had newer facilities and equipment, so it was chosen as the site for the denominational publishing center. Raymond and his family moved to Harrisburg and remained there for the next 30 years. When the Board of Publications erected a new headquarters building in Dayton, Ohio, Raymond's office was transferred there in August, 1965.

In addition to editing youth publications for the Evangelical and the Evangelical United Brethren denominations, Dr. Veh wrote numerous books, pamphlets, and articles including: *Thumbnail Sketches of Evangelical Bishops*, *Interesting Evangelical Churches*, *The Evangelical Church at Work*, *My Church Faces Union*, and *Life is an Achievement*, among others. He also contributed hundreds of articles and sermons to religious and secular publications such as *The Christian Herald*, *Christian Century*, and the *Upper Room*. His final service to the denomination was editing *Penetration for Transformation*—the 1968 denominational study book.

Dr. Veh served several times as chairman of the Conference on Church Magazines for Children and Youth and as chairman of the Young People's section of the International Council of Religious Education. He was also vice president of the Cooperative Publication Association and a member of the Advisory Council to *The Link* (a serviceman's publication

to which he was a frequent contributor). He was on the Board of Directors of the John Milton Society for the Blind and on the boards of directors of several state agencies. For 20 years he was the denomination's representative on the American Bible Society Advisory Council and chairman of the Report Committee for a number of years.

Active in city, state, and national councils of Christian Education, Dr. Veh held important leadership positions. In 1939 he was youth press representative to the First World Conference of Christian Youth in Amsterdam, Holland and in 1948 and 1954 to the first and second assemblies of the World Council of Churches. From 1938 to 1966 he was the director or co-director of publicity for the General Conferences of the Evangelical and EUB denominations.

Dr. Veh's long tenure of office afforded close association with leaders of the denomination. At different times his office adjoined the office of four bishops; namely, E. W. Praetorius, John S. Stamm, George Edward Epp, and Hermann W. Kaebnich. Veh had continuous membership on the Board of Christian Education and membership for a number of decades on the Board of Missions, the Department (Commission) on Christian Social Action, and the Program Council. In the Evangelical Church he served as Secretary of Christian Social Action. During World War II his office distributed thousands of leaflets on a total of 55 subjects addressed to men and women in the military and to conscientious objectors.

A young people's society was founded on September 13, 1880 (six months before the founding of Christian Endeavor by Francis E. Clark) in the former Commercial Street Evangelical Association church in Dayton, Ohio. Bishop E. W. Praetorious grew up in this church and was always proud of its role in the vanguard of young people's work. The Evangelical Association's youth organization, the Young People's Alliance, was founded on August 10-12, 1891. The United Evangelical Church organized its youth group—the Keystone League of Christian Endeavor—on October 13, 1891.

After the 1922 merger of the two branches of the church, Christian Endeavor—known as the Evangelical League of Christian

Endeavor—became its youth organization. Dr. Veh served on the board of the International Society of Christian Endeavor as a representative of his denomination. In addition he wrote junior high school topic commentaries for the *Christian Endeavor World* of which he was contributing editor.

Of Christian Endeavor Dr. Veh said: “Christian Endeavor did a notable service for youth during many decades. But the organization got into the grip of older leaders who were not aware of the changing attitudes of youth and the trends of youth work in local churches that were utilizing youth’s ideas and energies. Unfortunately, Christian Endeavor did not take youth and denominational youth leaders into top leadership until too late. Thus denominations began to draw away from this inclusive organization.”

Consequently, during the 1930s the Evangelical Church recognized the need for a general organization for youth, and the Young People’s Union was formed. Annual conferences formed conference Unions, and youth found significant expression of their faith through them. In 1944 this resulted in the creation of the Youth Fellowship as the form of youth work in the denomination. With the merger of 1946 the Youth Fellowship was continued as the youth work of the denomination.

When the Church planned for the

transition from Christian Endeavor to the denominationally-oriented Youth Fellowship, Raymond was one of the original denominational youth directors that formed the Christian Youth Building and New World Movement—efforts that strengthened the Youth Fellowship philosophy. He became one of the adult counselors to the General Youth Fellowship Council and continued this relationship until his retirement.

Despite the mounting concerns about the direction of youth work within the denomination, prior to the 1946 merger large conventions of youth took place in Reading, Pennsylvania (1923), Lake Koronis, Minnesota (1926 and 1940), Naperville, Illinois (1930), Cedar Falls, Iowa (1934), and Oakwood Park, Indiana (1936 and 1946). These were inspirational events that resulted in many young people choosing Christian vocations. Extensive contacts with young people at conferences such as these, as well as at camps, interdenominational conferences, and college campus visits provided enriching fellowship for Raymond. More importantly, however, they provided an awareness of the need for new approaches in general and local church work. His ability to stay “up to date” in his 41 years as an editor was impressive indeed.

Dr. Vey also served as Secretary of the Board of Christian Social Action, an additional duty to his editorial and youth work. World War I gave the Protestant Church a new recognition of the need for applying Christian values to the problems of humanity. The horrors of war, the shallowness of materialism, the damaging effects of liquor, and declining standards of morality sparked the general church to action in the post-war period. Denominations formed councils or boards to give more detailed considerations to meeting these pressing needs. While some members of the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church were concerned about these issues prior to World War I, the concern became more widespread in the years after the war.

During World War II the Evangelical Church’s Board of Christian Social Action had a file in Dr. Vey’s office of the names of 55,000 men and women in national service sent in by

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pastors or committees of local churches. Bulletins were sent to the churches monthly on a variety of subjects. These were intended to be mailed to the soldiers in order to maintain church contacts with them and to encourage and support them. Dr. Vey explained that “Letters were sent from my office as Secretary of the Board to conscientious objectors, and the men appreciated them. Some of these young men gave themselves to alternative work in hospitals or in natural conservation projects, but a few of them went to prison. These men did not register their attitude of resistance by turning to the ministry to escape the draft. Rather, they had deep-seated convictions about making a Christian witness for peace as against war.”

In 1968, after 41 years in his editorial role, and after the merger that created the United Methodist Church, Raymond Veh retired. In his interview, he hastened to point out that he favored all of the mergers he had seen: the 1922 Evangelical-United Evangelical merger, the 1946 Evangelical-United Brethren merger, and the 1968 Methodist-EUB merger. At the time of the merger, however, he was 67 years old and

wanted to spend time with his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren. He and Helen retired to Thiensville, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee to be closer to his daughter and her family.

What prompted E. W. Praetorius and other leaders of the church to single out Raymond Veh to edit Evangelical Association youth publications we cannot know. It was not unusual, however, to “handpick” people in the denomination. My Dad, George W. Frey, was similarly chosen for a position in the Evangelical School of Theology—a position for which he had not applied and did not know he was under consideration. While this might have worked against diversity within the denomination, it did give “decision-makers” time to observe people carefully before they were chosen. Perhaps Raymond was right in saying it would not have happened until he opened himself to God’s direction. But after viewing his life, it is easy to affirm the effectiveness of Dr. Vey as an editor, a youth leader, a preacher, a family man, and a Christian. His influence on many young men and women can still be seen in the church today.

Rev. William J. Shuey: Forgotten Leader (Part 1)

by

Robert L. Frey

The following article is based on material in the March 6, 1920, issue of The Religious Telescope (the United Brethren weekly publication). This issue contained the reprint of a handwritten autobiography by William J. Shuey, an excerpt from a published history of the Shuey family, and three reviews of Shuey’s life by contemporaries. The early part of Rev. Shuey’s life is contained in this issue. The Winter 2011 issue will contain the next installment.

William J. Shuey was a man of the 19th Century. Consequently no one living today knew him. Despite the fact that he held a low visibility position in the denomination for much of his career, he was obviously a significant force in the United Brethren Church in the second half of the 19th Century. This was evidenced by his frequent mention in Berger’s and Drury’s denominational histories and by the eulogies published on his death.

William was born on February 9, 1827, in the river town of Miamisburg, Ohio, ten miles south of Dayton. Despite the fact that there were no United Brethren churches in Miamisburg, William’s parents, Adam and Hannah Aley

Shuey, were members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ prior to William’s birth. Germantown, Ohio, one of the earliest areas of UB evangelistic activity was only several miles to the west of Miamisburg, and this probably explains their membership. For 14 years Adam Shuey served as the first postmaster of Miamisburg.

William recalls that his earliest religious experiences were in the home where his father provided solid religious teaching. At the age of nine “at a great meeting at George Zeller’s, on Little Twin Creek above Germantown, I was distinctly convicted of sin and would have sought the conversion of my soul had I been encouraged and

helped by older Christians. The opinion prevailed that children of my age were too young to comprehend the plan of salvation."

Shortly after this disappointing religious experience the Shuey family moved to a wilderness area near Springfield, Ohio, where they attempted to develop a productive farm. According to William's autobiography, the resulting struggles cooled the religious ardor of his family, and the lack of a church in the area contributed to this "backsliding." But the arrival of the United Brethren missionary Rev. Benjamin P. Wheat, who lived in the Shuey home and conducted a "protracted meeting" in the area, had a profound impact on young William. Indeed, at the age of 16 William experienced a painful and extended struggle "to claim the promise of salvation. The light pierced my soul, and I was made happy in the hope of eternal life."

The result of Rev. Wheat's efforts was the creation of a society that became the Lagonda UB church as well as churches in Beavertown, Aleys, Smithville (now Sulphur Grove), Tremont, Christiansburg, and other locations. William recalled that "Our religious training after the organization of the society was rigid and thorough. The old-fashioned class and prayer-meeting were in their prime. Every week we were called upon to speak and pray in social meetings. None were exempt. The result was a large band of earnest workers..." Unlike the Germantown experience, this time William received substantial support from older members and from association with people his own age.

But William's path to the Christian ministry was hardly an easy one. Like many before him, he resisted the call of God to ministry. Rev. Jacob Antrim and Rev. Theophilus Rork followed Rev. Wheat on the circuit and each persuaded William to speak in public and finally attempt to preach. William was aware that he did not have the preparation for such a calling. Common school training was not enough. In nearby Springfield there was a Methodist academy known as The Ohio Conference High School. Eager to support his son, Adam Shuey sent William to this school. But after four months he became ill and contracted a substantial medical bill that prevented further work at the school. "Our older ministers did not urge young men looking to the ministry to go to school; rather dissuaded them if they had promising native talent."

Nonetheless, William was appointed junior preacher of the Germantown Circuit. Here again he experienced a lack of support. Rev. John Zeller of Millville, Ohio, was the preacher in charge. But he was timid and reserved and provided no help to William. "We seldom met. I was inexpressibly green

and, with few words of encouragement, I became despondent." Several relatives advised William to return home and help his father. Convinced, that his call was mistaken, he did so. Nonetheless, during his time on the Germantown Circuit the First United Brethren Church of Dayton was organized—a church he later pastored.

Now William's life appeared to move in a different direction. Working with his father in the carpenter business and teaching school in the winter, he was able to provide a decent living for himself. He built a house in Springfield and in the spring of 1848 he married Sarah Berger. William H. Rhinehart, the first editor of *The Religious Telescope*, presided over this wedding. William's life was about to change again.

For "recreation" William attended a quarterly meeting at Aley's Church. "I remained a week. God poured out his revival power upon the whole community. With one or two companions, we visited from house to house for miles around and exhorted the people to become religious. God was with us in mighty power, and scores were awakened to a new life. The old fire was rekindled in my soul, and the voice of God came to me again."

Convinced he had not misunderstood his call, he accepted the offer to assist Rev. R. Norris the pastor of Aley's Church. With the support and guidance of an experienced minister William was able to assist in many conversions and to help establish new societies, including one at the Sixth Street Engine House in Dayton. On September 1, 1848, he joined the Miami Conference assembled at Farmersville, Ohio. A year later he accepted commitment to itinerancy and was assigned to the Lewisburg Circuit west of Dayton.

There were seven churches on the Lewisburg Circuit and on his first round William had an interesting encounter at New Hope. When he arrived at the church he had been told to go to the parlor of Rev. Jacob Surface who lived next door to the church. After introducing himself, "Brother Surface drew a long breath and said, 'I am astonished that such a stripling as you are would undertake to travel a circuit.' I was 'astonished' myself, but I was in for it. The people were there and waiting, and something must be said. Brother Surface's wet blanket did not kill me. How well I preached I cannot say, but I went on my way trusting in God for help and success."

Rev. Shuey's two years on the Lewisburg Circuit went quite well. During the second year a great revival, known as the Ritz revival, took place. "I never before nor since saw more wonderful displays of divine influence," Shuey recalled in his autobiography. His reputation for revival preaching

followed him to his next assignment, First United Brethren Church in Cincinnati—a relatively strong church for so young a preacher. During one of his fortnightly revival sessions more than 200 were converted. Despite his success during his five years

in these two assignments, once again, Rev. Shuey's career was about to experience a turn.

(To be continued in the next issue)

EUB Missionaries in Africa

In early 1962 the following missionaries were listed in *The World Evangel* (April 1962 edition, p. 140) as assigned to Africa. How many of them do you remember? If your name is on this list, the *Telescope Messenger* is interested in an account of your experiences on the mission field. Names in bold are the towns/stations of the mission.

NIGERIA

Bambur

Rev. Phillip S. Gehm
Rev. Dean S. Gilliland
Mrs. Lois Gilliland
Mr. David Hilton, M.D.
Mrs. Laveta Hilton
Mr. Woodrow R. Macke
Mrs. Wilma Macke
Miss Mary Martin, R.N.
Dr. Ira E. McBride
Mrs. Kathleen McBride
Mr. Dean Olewiler, M.D.
Mrs. Jane Olewiler
Miss Lucy Rowe
Miss Amy Skartved, R.N.
Miss Florence Walter, R.N.

Pero

Rev. David Rickard
Mrs. Marian Rickard

Waka

Miss Lois F. Schmidt

Zinna

Rev. A. J. Faust
Mrs. Aletha Faust

SIERRA LEONE

Bo

Mr. Lester Bradford
Mrs. Winifred Bradford, M.D.
Rev. Frank Closson
Mrs. Nathalie Closson
Rev. Clyde Gallow
Mrs. Gladys Fahner Gallow
Rev. Charles W. Leader
Mrs. Bertha Leader
Mr. James G. Simpson, Jr.
Mrs. Cleo Simpson

Freetown

Rev. L. O. Shirley
Mrs. Grace Shirley
Mr. J. Dean Spencer
Mrs. Ramona Spencer
Mr. Donald Theuer
Mrs. Lilburne Theuer

Jaiama

Miss Metra Heisler, R.N.

Kabala

Miss Jane Eberle

SIERRA LEONE

Lalehun

Rev. Gilbert Olson
Mrs. Beverly Olson

Moyamba

Miss Elaine Gasser
Mrs. Marjorie Hager
Miss June Hartranft
Miss Lois Lehman
Miss Mary Alice Lippert
Miss Virginia Pickarts

Rotifunk

Miss Betty Beveridge, R.N.
Miss Esther Megill
Miss Mabel I. Silver, M.D.
Mr. David V. Stephenson, M.D.
Mrs. Alverta Stephenson

Tiama

Miss Lois Olsen, R.N.

Koidu

Rev. Jack K. Thomas
Mrs. Delores A. Thomas

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From the Editor

With this issue comes time to renew your membership in The Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage. The form for doing so is on the bottom of page 7. Because we are attempting to determine how many members have e-mail capabilities, please include this information with your renewal in the appropriate space.

Once again I am interested in receiving articles about people, events, or experiences in the life of the EUB denomination. I am particularly interested in articles about the history of former EUB churches that are flourishing today. These articles should be between two and five typewritten (single-spaced) pages in length. Send any articles to the editor at 1356 Hidden Creek Dr., Miamisburg, Ohio 45342-6746, and not to United Seminary.